

**Minutes of the
Committee of Practitioners Conference Call Meeting
November 20, 2013**

Call to Order

The meeting of the ESEA Committee of Practitioners was called to order by Becky Guffin at 2:00 p.m. via conference call.

Attendance

Members present on the phone were: Becky Guffin, Joan Pribyl, and Chrissy Peterson.

Staff persons in attendance were: Abby Javurek-Humig, Shannon Malone, Shawna Poitra, Betsy Chapman, Jordan Dueis, Dawn Smith, Yutzil Rodriguez, Jenifer Palmer, and Laura Johnson Frame.

Allocation of Title I Part A Funds

Malone advised the committee that the Department has available approximately \$1,150,000 from the State's FY 2013 Title I Part A program's school improvement reservation. The funds were available due to left over balances under prior year's awards to districts and because the DOE was unable to award all funds during the 2012-13 school year as the State planned and prepared to implement the Flexibility waiver. A request was made for the committee to consider allowing the Department to use \$150,000 to provide State-level assistance to Priority and Focus schools. The Department proposed to use these funds in three ways: 1) Conducting regional workshops; providing data facilitators; 2) Parent and community engagement projects; and 3) Provide funds to implement training for teachers of English language learners. The Department will award the remaining funds to districts to provide support Focus and Priority schools in SY 2013-14.

Motion by Peterson, second by Pribyl to allow the Department of Education to withhold \$150,000 of the State's Title I Part A school improvement reservation as described above and to use the remaining funds for awards to eligible districts. Motion passed.

Overview of Proposed Changes for the ESEA Waiver Extension

Abbey Javurek-Humig, Director of the Division of Assessment and Accountability, reviewed the proposed changes that the Department will make to the ESEA Waiver with the application for extension due during the winter of 2014. The committee was asked for their comments on the following areas.

- Releasing the school assessment and accountability reports in September. ***Comment: the committee members were concerned that this is too late. Preferably the schools would like the data earlier so that teachers can go through the data prior to school beginning, prior to mid-August.***
- Establishing the first year of Focus School or Priority School designation to a planning year rather than an implementation year.

- Developing new criteria for schools that are progressing and yet continue to remain with the Focus and Priority designation. **Comment: The committee members mentioned examples of school situations where it would be helpful to acknowledge academic progress.**
- Removing teacher and principal evaluations from the school performance indicator. This does not eliminate implementation of the new requirements for the evaluations.
- Changing how accountability is calculated for special schools. **Comment: Yes, it would be good to have a different process for these schools. These schools have highly mobile students who have difficulty remaining at grade level.**
- Looking more closely at the percent of gap group students scoring higher on Smarter Balance. **Comments: The committee had questions about “n” size. DOE should look at history of the English Language Learners subgroup. The committee asked DOE to run scenarios.**
- Using three years of data on the school report cards as a clearer indicator of progress.
- Calculating attendance as the percent of students meeting the 94% state attendance rate based on enrolled dates only. Priority and Focus schools report highly mobile populations. **Comment: Yes, we have schools that end the school year with a different student population than the population present at the beginning of the school year. Attendance is very difficult. Each district calculates attendance differently. Will DOE specify what qualifies as an exempted attendance? The committee agreed as there is a high correlation between attendance and achievement.**
- Considering two different types of growth models; the 2015 Smarter Balance test will be used to set a base-line. The DOE will be working more in this area.
- Going forward SPI points will be awarded for both college readiness and career readiness. Currently, points are awarded just for percent of students meeting the ACT test benchmarks in math and English. Students will be able to take the National Career Readiness test in the 11th or 12th grade funded by the State. **Comment: Students may have taken the ACT several years making it difficult for the district calculation. Options are always good.**

School Improvement Grant State Application

SD DOE is applying for a new School Improvement Grant to begin in the 2014-2015 school year. The grant is available to currently designated priority schools, except those with a current School Improvement Grant. DOE will hold an application process this winter/spring, upon approval of our application from US ED. The funds will be available for the 2014-2015 school-year, with two additional years contingent on federal funding.

One of the requirements of applying for the grant is that SD DOE asks for comments from our Committee of Practitioners on the application before sending it to US ED. The committee was provided with South Dakota’s application and the two applications that will be used for district and school applicants. Poitra went through the applications with the committee.

1. FY13 South Dakota State SIG Application- state application to apply for funds.
2. FY13 LEA SIG Application- the LEAs (districts) will complete when the application process opens up.
3. FY13 School SIG Application- application the schools will complete when the application process opens up.

The committee asked questions about whether both priority and focus schools may be included in grant awards and whether the funds are available in the first year of designation.

Questions were raised as to whether the federal requirement on the implementation of policies refers to school board adopted policies or to procedures. Is a school district expected to adopt a board approved policy pertaining to interventions? A suggestion was made to change the LEA application to add “policies, practices, and procedures.” The committee wanted clarification on including school closure.

Adjournment

Motion by Peterson, second by Pribyl to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.

Guffin declared the meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.